

Watchdog Group for CIA?

New questions regarding the objectivity and reliability of Central Intelligence agency reports on political developments in Latin America have been raised in Washington. Some correspondents say the Federal Bureau of Investigation has been called on by President Johnson to supply independent intelligence reports as a backstop for the CIA service.

Officials deny this, but admit the FBI was given special intelligence assignments in the Dominican Republic when the Santo Domingo crisis surprised Washington last spring. Aside from this, they contend FBI operations in various Latin American countries are confined to international police activities.

Because of natural secrecy requirements in political and military intelligence work, little reliable information is available regarding such activities. If the FBI has been called on to double check CIA work, officials would be unlikely to discuss it frankly.

Nevertheless, the situation brings to mind fears long expressed by Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota and others who advocate a congressional watchdog committee to maintain some general oversight of CIA activities and spending. This group has made the point that since CIA not only gathers

intelligence, but carries out direct action programs affecting foreign governments, it must be extremely difficult for it to maintain complete objectivity in reporting and analyzing political developments affecting its own policies and undertakings. For example, if CIA is actively supporting or opposing a certain Latin American regime, can its intelligence reports remain uncolored by these involvements?

Indications are that CIA reports from Santo Domingo did not prepare the White House for actual developments there. This presumably was one reason the FBI was called on to help assess the situation.

If there are weaknesses in CIA operations and attitudes, a congressional committee such as Senator McCarthy suggests, comparable to the Joint Atomic Energy Committee, could be most useful. In addition such a committee could help counteract unjustified criticisms of CIA, of which there are doubtless more than a few. The CIA cannot answer critics directly, but it could defend itself before a committee and thus help clear the air of unfounded charges.

Thus a responsible watchdog committee representing the House and Senate could serve a constructive purpose both in guarding against possible unwise CIA courses and in supporting the CIA when this is needed.

'FIRST THING WE GOTTA DO IS FIND OUT WHAT FBI MEANS!'

